

Eske Kath and Johan Nobell

Stalke Galleri
Vesterbrogade 14A

15.03-02 to 14.04.02

The exhibition presented new works by Eske Kath and Johan Nobell.

Eske Kath presented new paintings, collages, and sound sculptures. His paintings consisted of a series of structured elements that at times appeared spacious and at other times broke with the established sense of space. Tight, architectural forms were combined with emotionally charged symbols such as mountains, flowers, and drops, which almost transgressed or redirected the constructivist framework of the paintings.

The works balanced between nature and culture, space and in-between, the optically transparent and the massive. They appeared deliberately conscious—superficial yet poetically narrative. Superficial in the sense that seemingly smooth, translucent surfaces were painted opaquely and imperfectly, suggesting that something might be hidden beneath the surface. This surface was explicitly emphasized by the paintings and collages themselves: in some works, the canvas was replaced by denim; in others, by paper cut-outs from advertisements incorporated into the composition. Glitter, embroidery, and spray paint were also applied. These simple effects connected symbolically to the everyday language of pop culture.

The relationship between painterly depth and superficial skin was equally perplexing in Eske Kath's sculptural speaker cabinets. Sculptural drops made of ceramic hung from the gallery walls. The ceramic functioned as a surface, while the hollow interior created resonance and interference in the sound emitted by the sculptures, causing them to vibrate. Sound thus became both visual and physical, adding a lyrical and poetic dimension to the exhibition.



Eske Kath installation view, Stalke Galleri, 2002.

Johan Nobell grew up in the countryside of Gammelgarn on Gotland and painted landscapes in oil on canvas. Landscape painting had retained its position in art as a metaphor for the general human condition. The genre's history and its emphasis on mastering subtle nuances enabled Nobell to combine directional clarity with a distinctive openness toward irrationality.

In his landscapes, scenes of sprouting vegetation and mechanical elements were combined with burning fires, stumps, and other remnants—elements that seemed to emerge from behind the canvas—alongside abstractions that resisted clear identification. Nobell's paintings operated on two levels: from a distance, they appeared as panoramas of unfamiliar terrain; up close, they revealed themselves as landscapes seen through a microscope. Order proved deceptive. Upon closer inspection, the landscapes vibrated with threats, conflicts, and contradictions, where fragmented actions resembled guerrilla movements in an unmanageable territory. The landscape appeared overrun and desolate. Nobell's paintings depicted a pause—a moment between battles. The struggle seemed over, yet it was not.

Johan Nobell was educated at Valand between 1989 and 1994 and lived in Stockholm. In 2001, he received an IASPIS scholarship at ISCP in New York. Later that year, he held an exhibition at Pierogi 2000 in New York.



Johan Nobell installation view, Stalke Galleri, 2002.